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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JEFF MERKLEY, a Senator from the State of Oregon.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's prayer will be offered by the Reverend Dr. Timothy Keller, Pastor, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York City.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty and Everlasting God, Your presence brings joy in every condition, and Your grace is the health of every community.

We ask now that You would be both present and gracious toward these law-makers and leaders as they begin their daily work. Visit them with a spirit of understanding, counsel, and courage, so that they may both know and do what is right.

Give them wisdom as well as compassion as they ponder the plight of the powerless, so that they may seek justice and peace in our country. Give them a spirit of unity, so that, despite honest and deeply felt differences of conviction, they may humbly work together for the common good.

And so that we may obtain all that You promise, empower us, as a nation, to love all that You do command.

This we ask in the Name of the one Redeemer, who gives Himself to us, that we might give ourselves to Him. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JEFF MERKLEY led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication

to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, November 6, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JEFF MERKLEY, a Senator from the State of Oregon, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. MERKLEY thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, the Senate will resume consideration of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill. I encourage Senators to come to the floor today and offer amendments.

Also, we will probably come in around 1 o'clock or 2 o'clock Monday and that will be an opportunity to offer amendments. It is very important to finish this bill before Veterans Day. I think that would send a good message to the veterans of our country. Senators are, therefore, encouraged to come to the floor and offer amendments.

There will be no rollcall votes today. There will be rollcall votes Monday starting at 5:30. The first vote on Monday will be on Andre Davis to be a circuit judge for the Fourth Circuit. We hope to have other votes that evening, based on the amendments that are filed.

It is my understanding the distinguished Senator from New Mexico, Mr. UDALL, is going to be here to offer an amendment today. The manager is here, the chairman, Senator JOHNSON of South Dakota. We are open for business. It is very important people understand that they have the opportunity to offer amendments, if, in fact, they have any.

In years past, we have finished this appropriations bill in a matter of a couple hours. This year, it has been a little tough to get through appropriations bills. We need to get through the bill. We have a lot to do before this year ends.

I express my appreciation to Senator JOHNSON for his usual fine work. He is an outstanding Senator and has done a good job of managing this bill through the committee process to get where we are today.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3082, which the clerk will state by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3082) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Johnson/Hutchison amendment No. 2730, in the nature of a substitute.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from South Dakota is recognized.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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